



Traffic Services Section Michigan State Police Field Update #19

Providing Traffic Related Information and Services to Michigan Law Enforcement

Section Phone (517) 336-6171

www.michigan.gov/msp-traffic

Fax (517) 336-6259

Changes to the Speed Limit Laws

Effective November 9, 2006, several sections of the [Michigan Vehicle Code](#) related to [speed limits](#) are changing. Many of these changes are designed to increase traffic safety by reducing the number of artificially low speed limits, especially within municipalities, and to increase driver confidence that speed limit signs accurately reflect the actual conditions faced by drivers. Artificially low speed limits are often set for political reasons due to misunderstanding of traffic engineering principles. They tend to increase passing maneuvers and tailgating, cause contempt among motorists for legitimate traffic controls and law enforcement, and are often responsible for the phenomenon known as "road rage." Links to the amended versions of the specific sections listed below have not been included, as they will change after the laws take effect. Both the old and new language is available at www.legislature.mi.gov.

Truck Speeds

The speed limit for most trucks on freeways where the speed limit for other vehicles is 70 mph will be increased from 55 mph to 60 mph. Highways with speed limits between 55 mph and 65 mph (inclusive) will remain at 55 mph for trucks (MCL 257.627(6)).

School Bus Speeds

The speed limit for school buses will be increased from 50 mph to 55 mph on highways with a speed limit between 55 mph and 65 mph (inclusive), and 60 mph on freeways with a speed limit of 70 mph (MCL 257.627(6) and (7)).

Minimum Freeway Speed

The minimum speed on all freeways will be increased from 45 mph to 55 mph, except as necessary for conditions, or pursuant to a permit issued by the road authority (MCL 257.628(8)).

Business District

The definition of "business district" (MCL 257.5) will be amended to more clearly and accurately define those areas where the 25 mph **prima facie** business district speed limit is appropriate (MCL 257.627(2)(a)). **Please note** that some municipalities have labeled certain sections of town as their business districts. These designated areas may or may not meet the definition of business district for purposes of traffic enforcement.

Residence District

The definition of "residence district" (MCL 257.51) will be repealed. For urban and suburban residential areas with moderate to high population densities, there will be a formula for **prima facie** speed limits (MCL 257.627(2)(d) through (f)) based on the number of driveways and intersecting streets. If not posted, these areas are 55 mph (MCL 257.627(10)). Public streets **within** platted subdivisions and condominium complexes will be **prima facie** 25 mph (MCL 257.627(2)(c)), and do not have to be posted.

Traffic Control Orders

Speed limits higher than 25 mph and lower than 55 mph (or 70 mph freeway) require a Traffic Control Order (TCO) based on a traffic engineering study. A TCO must be filed with the county clerk for absolute speed limits on county roads or state trunkline highways (MCL 257.628(6)), or municipal clerk for **modified prima facie** speed limits on city or village streets ([R 28.1153](#)), in order to be valid.

Note on Prima Facie Speed Limits

All prima facie speed limits, including **all** municipal speed limits, are **presumed** valid based on expected worst-case conditions, i.e. heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic. If these conditions are not present at the time of the offense, a driver receiving a citation may **rebut this presumption through an affirmative defense and successfully argue that enforcement was not appropriate**. This shifts the burden of proof back to the police officer.

[Alcohol Enforcement Unit](#)
[Grant Administration Unit](#)
[Section Commander](#)
[Speed Measurement Unit](#)

(517) 336-6338
(517) 336-6121
(517) 336-6611
(517) 336-6651

[Crash Reconstruction Unit](#)
[Field Support Unit](#)
[Section Technician](#)
[Vehicle Code Unit](#)

(517) 336-6579
(517) 336-6685
(517) 336-6171
(517) 336-6660